Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Stewart J. Brown
University of Edinburgh

The theme of this 54th volume of *Studies in Church History* is Church and Empire, and the twenty-three essays included here explore the complex and ever evolving relationship of ecclesiastical and imperial power within a range of historical contexts. The essays represent the plenary addresses and a selection of the communications presented at two highly successful Ecclesiastical History Society conferences during my presidential year – a summer conference held at the University of Edinburgh in July 2016 and a winter conference held at Pembroke College, Cambridge, in January 2017. Both conferences attracted a large number of speakers and participants from across the world, and reflected the considerable scholarly interest in questions concerning the relations of Church and empire. These questions include the extent to which Christianity in the Western World became linked to the political power of large imperial states, the nature and extent of the connection of Christianity to the expansion of Western imperialism in the early modern and modern periods, and the manner in which the Church often came into conflict with imperial power, especially when Christians insisted on the spiritual independence of the Church and on maintaining an independent Christian moral witness against the wars of conquest, cruelty, racism, oppression and arrogance of power that were too often associated with imperial rule.

From its beginnings, the Christian Church has had a close, often symbiotic relationship with imperial power. Christianity emerged as a religion within the Roman Empire; its founder suffered the Roman death of crucifixion within a Roman province by the act of a Roman governor. Early Christians experienced sporadic, but brutal persecution and executions at the hands of imperial Roman officials, because they would not sacrifice to the imperial gods and insisted on the exclusive claims of their religion. Yet the early spread of

Christianity was also assisted by Roman roads and sea routes, by Roman urban centres and by the *Pax Romanica* prevailing across the Mediterranean world. And in time, persecution ceased and the Empire became Christian. In 313 CE the Roman Emperor Constantine granted Christianity toleration and protection under Roman law, and promoted unity among Christians, most notably by the First Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. By the Edict of Thessalonica in 380 CE, the Emperor Theodosius I made the Christianity of the Nicene Creed the only officially legitimate religion in the Roman Empire. But now it was pagans and other non-Christians who experienced persecution. Increasingly the institutions of the Church grew to resemble those of the Empire, including the liturgical dress of its clergy, the use of the basilica form in Christian places of worship, the hierarchical organisation of the clergy, and the claims of universal spiritual authority by the Bishops of Rome. In the teachings of the Church, the institutions of both Church and Roman Empire came to be portrayed as divinely sanctioned and part of the providential plan for humankind.

The Western Roman Empire collapsed in the later fifth century under pressure from northern invaders, but the Western Church survived amid the warfare and social dislocations in the West. The Popes in Rome now began emulating the style of the Roman Emperors while the clergy helped preserve Roman learning and culture, keeping alive memories of the Roman Empire. The ideal of the Roman Empire was revived in ninth-century Europe with the Carolingian Empire; the Carolingians embraced the alliance of Church and Empire, and portrayed themselves as promoting the true universal Christianity and they had a significant role in the Christianisation of Europe. The Carolingian Empire soon weakened but it was revived in the tenth century, and by the thirteenth century it was being called, significantly, the Holy Roman Empire. Alongside the Holy Roman Empire, other empires emerged in the West, including the Anglo-Norman, Genoese and Venetian Empires; they were also Christian empires, looking to the ancient Roman model of the unity of Church and Empire.

In Asia Minor and the Balkans, the Eastern Roman Empire, or Byzantine Empire, with its great capital of Constantinople, survived until the fifteenth century. The Byzantine alliance of Church and Empire was expressed in the lavish ceremonial of the imperial court and the rich decoration of its churches. The Byzantine, or Eastern Orthodox, Church gradually diverged in theology and worship from the Roman Catholic Church in the West, and the division became formal and permanent with the Great Schism of 1054. The Byzantine Empire collapsed with the fall of Constantinople to the Islamic Turks in 1453. But then the emerging Muscovite Empire in the north, which had embraced Eastern Orthodoxy, gradually developed its claim to be the true successor to the ancient Roman Empire. Its capital of Moscow became the 'third Rome', rising up after the fall, first of ancient Rome and then of Constantinople. The Muscovite, or Russian Empire, expressed the union of Orthodox Church and Empire in the person of the Tsar, or 'Holy Father', spreading Orthodox Christianity across northern and central Asia, until the Russian Revolution of 1917.

In medieval Europe, re-conceptions of the political-theological ideal of the Papacy led to tensions over the proper relations of the Church and the successor states of the Roman *imperium,* especially the states comprising the Holy Roman Empire. These re-conceptions of Papal Empire included the ideas that the Pope in Rome, as the vicar of Christ, was the *dominus mundi*, or the one supreme authority over the world, and that the Pope had the authority to appoint and depose emperors and kings. But against this conception of Papal Empire there were conflicting notions of 'regnal imperialism', by which each monarch acted as an 'emperor', in the manner of the Roman Emperor Constantine, within their own kingdom, and exercised a degree of authority over the Church within their territory in the interest of Church unity. The 'investiture controversy' of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries was one expression of these tensions between *dominus mundi* and regnal imperialism, and it weakened earlier medieval efforts to unite Papacy and imperial rule. The

sixteenth-century Reformation further shattered the older unity of Church and Empire. At the beginning of the English Reformation, King Henry VIII famously based his claim to royal supremacy over the Church on the grounds that 'this realm of England is an empire', relying on conceptions of *imperium* that reflected those of Constantine and the fourth-century Roman Empire. In the German context, princes, dukes, and other civic authorities increasingly claimed the authority of both emperor and pope. The Reformation, and especially the wars that follwoed the Reformation, would lead to the policy within the diverse territories of the Holy Roman Empire of *cuius regio, eius religio*, by which the ruler of each territory would determine the religion of that territory, a policy that would largely endure into the nineteenth century.

The beginnings of the era of European discovery and colonisation from the sixteenth century brought new conceptions of the alliance of Church and Empire, now focused on territorial expansion rather than constitutional relations. The Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, became associated with European expansion in the Americas, Asia and later Africa, and the formation of the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French and British Empires. For many Christians, the territorial expansion of the European empires was part of the divine plan for the spread of Christianity. God, they believed, now worked through Empires for the Christianisation of the non-Western world, just as God had worked through the ancient Roman Empire for the Christianisation of the Western world. Missionaries often followed in the wake of conquest; the Bible often followed the flag. The Spanish conquest and destruction of the Aztec and Inca empires in the New World was followed by priests who baptised the surviving populations and subsequently organised them into dioceses and parishes of the Catholic Church. Clergy accompanied colonial settlers in the extraordinary migration of European peoples to the new settlement colonies in the Americas, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. Missionaries, supported by Churches and voluntary Christian

societies at home, worked for the conversion of the subject peoples of the empires, and viewed missionary outreach as the providential purpose of empire. But the connection of the Bible and the flag was always an ambiguous one. Many missionaries came to see themselves not only as preachers of the gospel, but also as protectors of the original inhabitants against enslavement, abuse and exploitation. In their role as protectors, they sometimes appealed for justice to the Christian imperial authorities in Europe. The Spanish Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas appealed successfully to the Spanish Emperor to extend legal protection to the indigenous peoples in the Spanish territories in the Americas. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Protestant Christians took a leading role in ending legal slavery within British Empire, which convinced many that their empire had a providential purpose in spreading not only Christianity but also freedom to the wider world. But missionaries could also be outspoken critics of empires, who could denounce conquest and exploitation, and who could believe themselves called by God to be defenders of the human rights and dignity of the subject peoples. The ever-changing relations of Christianity and imperialism, of glory and power, of Church and empire, have had a profound influence on the development of the Christian religion.

The Content and Structure of the Volume

The twenty-three essays in this volume have been organised in a chronological order. They fall into five loosely defined sections – 'Early Church and Late Antiquity'; 'Medieval Europe'; 'The Early Modern World'; and 'The Nineteenth Century' and 'Into the Twentieth Century'**.** The individual essays were not commissioned by the editors and they do not represent an attempt to provide comprehensive coverage of the theme of Church and Empire through the centuries. Rather, they form a collection of discrete case studies illustrating different aspects of the volume's theme. A preponderance of the essays deal with the British

Empire, which reflects the preponderance of communications offered at the two conferences, and also points to the growing scholarly interest in the religious aspects of the British Imperialism. All this said, the essays do cover a wide range of topics in the global history of Christianity.

Antiquity and Late Antiquity

The first three essays explore the relations of Church and Empire in Antiquity and late Antiquity. Tiziana Faitini's essay, 'Towards a Spiritual Empire: The Christian Exegesis of the Universal Census at the Time of Jesus's Birth', considers the depiction of the Roman census at the time of Christ's birth in the Gospel of Luke, and then proceeds to discuss interpretations of the census by three Church Fathers, Origen, Ambrose of Milan, and Orosius, and their reception and adaptation by medieval commentators. For them, the census was symbolic of Christ's offer of eternal life to all inhabitants of the world, while it also, especially for Orosius, represented Christ's endorsement of the Roman Empire as integral to the divine plan for propagating the gospel. Andrew J. Pottenger, in '"The Servant of God": Divine Favour and Instrumentality under Constantine, 318-25', offers an assessment of the motivations behind Constantine's efforts as Emperor to promote unity within the Church. Constantine, Pottenger argues, genuinely believed that God's favour both to his reign and to the Empire was directly connected to God's expectation of proper order and discipline within the Church. Division among Christians risked divine punishment, while unity in the Church would bring the divine favour upon which Constantine believed 'his life, power and the public welfare depended'.

In 'Imperium and the City of God: Augustine on Church and Empire', based on her plenary lecture at the summer conference, Gillian Clark provides a fresh reading of Augustine's *City of God*. In that work, she maintains, Augustine was not, as many have

held, offering a contrast of 'the Church as the city of God and the empire as the earthly city'. Rather, for Augustine everything that was, was ordained of God, and this included empires. He believed both that imperial rule was necessary for the right ordering of the world, and that imperial power intrinsically was neither good nor bad. The crucial opposition in Augustine's *City of God* was not between Church and Empire, but between those who worshipped the true God and those who did not. Whether a person was a citizen of the city of God or of the earthly city depended on the response of the individual to the love of God. The Roman Empire, for Augustine, existed by God's will and could be inhabited by citizens of the city of God.

Medieval Europe

The next four essays explore aspects of Church and empire in medieval Europe. Rosamond McKitterick's essay, 'The Popes as Rulers of Rome in the Aftermath of Empire, 476-769', is based on her plenary lecture presented at the Society's winter meeting. McKitterick shows how, after the last Roman Emperor was deposed in 476, the Papacy deliberately wove aspects of Roman imperial rule into its spiritual *imperium*. For her evidence, she draws upon the *Liber pontificalis*, a collection of 112 biographies of the Popes from St Peter in the first century to Pope Stephen V at the end of the ninth century. The text, which was written over time, reveals for McKitterick much about the 'ideological position adopted by the papacy in the new political configuration of the former Western Roman empire'. It highlights both the antiquity of the Catholic Church in Rome and the role of the bishops of Rome in shaping the ecclesiastical structures, doctrinal beliefs and patterns of worship for the whole Catholic Church. In the later biographies, moreover, the *Liber pontificalis* provides descriptions of the decoration, liturgical treasures, and architecture of the ecclesiastical buildings erected by the Popes; it shows the new Christian basilicas, resembling imperial *aura* or assembly halls, and

built in expensive marble or stone, to be potent examples of imperial emulation. 'The authors of the *Liber pontificalis*', McKitterick concludes, 'created a powerful picture of the popes … as the rulers of Rome and of the Church'.

In his essay on 'Empire, Ethnic Election and Exegesis in the *Opus Caroli (Libri Carolini)*' (which was awarded our Society's President's Prize for the best essay by an early career scholar), Conor O'Brien shows how Catholicity and Roman *imperium* were jointly revived by the Carolingian dynasty. Drawing on the massive eighth-century theological treatise, *Opus Caroli* (written at the command of Charlemagne and directed against the 'heresies' of the Byzantine Empire), O'Brien argues that the Frankish Carolingians based their claim to be the heirs of the Christian Roman Empire, not on divine election, but rather because they defended Christian universalism and the true Catholic Church. They, and not the Byzantines, were the true successors of the Roman Empire because they actively represented 'the universal Christian standards which the Greeks had failed to meet'. Benedict Wiedemann's essay, '*Super gentes et regna*: The Nature of Papal "Empire" in the Later Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', considers the changing nature of the 'papal imperium' in medieval Europe in the aftermath of the Investiture Controversy. Devoting particular attention to the cases of the Norman states in southern Italy and the kingdom of Aragon, Wiedemann shows that notions of the Pope's temporal authority, including the idea that kings accepted their kingdoms from the Pope, was fading by the twelfth century. It was becoming clear that the Papal 'empire', whatever the nature of its spiritual power, did not include temporal power over kings and emperors.

In her essay, 'Emperor and Church in the last Centuries of Byzantium', based on her plenary lecture at the summer conference, Ruth Macrides explores the relationship of Church and Emperor in the final centuries of the Byzantine Empire, giving particular attention to the role of ceremonial at the imperial court, including ritual and ceremonial dress, as expressions

of the relationship between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Emperor. She discerns considerable continuities in the relationship of Emperor and Church throughout her period, and she does not find evidence that the Church was growing in power and influence relative to the Emperor (as some have argued) or that the Constantinople Patriarch was exercising ecclesiastical power over the whole of the Eastern Church. Her assessment also indicates that there were more continuities in the relationship of Church and ruler in the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires than has been previously thought.

The Early Modern World

The five essays in this section explore themes of Church and empire in the early modern period, with the first four essays focusing on the English, Irish and Scottish Churches. In 'An English Bishop afloat in an Irish See: John Bale, Bishop of Ossory, 1552-1553', Stephen Tong makes effective use of the *Vocacyon*, an early example of English autobiography, to explore the life of the English cleric, John Bale, and his brief and turbulent tenure as the Protestant bishop of Ossory in Ireland. Tong argues that the Edwardian Church in Ireland had a double purpose of winning converts to Protestantism and extending Tudor imperial authority in Ireland. It pursued this second purpose by aligning the Irish Church with the English Church, and spreading the English language through sermons and the use of the Book of Common Prayer.

In 'Roman *imperium* and the Restoration Church', Jacqueline Rose, shows how authors in later Stuart England used examples from the fourth-century Roman Empire in interpreting their own English *imperium*. More particularly, she considers how amid the political tensions of the 1680s, some English Protestant authors drew comparisons between the Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate (Emperor 361-363 CE), who had sought to restore paganism in the Roman Empire, and James, Duke of York, who many feared would, on

coming to the throne, seek to restore Catholicism in the English *imperium.* These comparisons contributed in turn to discussions of how Christians should respond to an 'apostate' ruler, including the nature and extent of Christian passive obedience due to the ruler whom God placed on the throne. Andrew Carter explores a related theme in his 'No *imperium in imperio*? The Episcopal Church and the Royal Supremacy in Restoration Scotland' – noting how defenders of the established Episcopal Church in Restoration Scotland in the 1660s and 1670s appealed to the example of the Church in the ancient Roman Empire. Scottish Episcopalians, Carter maintained, drew on the model of ancient Rome in three ways – to demonstrate early Christian passive obedience to the emperor, to show that the doctrine of royal supremacy was rooted in the reign of Constantine, and to highlight the role of the *imperium* in preserving the unity of the Church against faction, enthusiasm, and heterodoxy.

In the next essay, Clare Loughlin directs attention to Scotland and Scottish Presbyterianism within the expanding early eighteenth-century British Empire. Her 'Concepts of Mission in Scottish Presbyterianism: The SSPCK, the Highlands and Britain's American Colonies, 1709-40', considers the mission work of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), first in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, and then, from 1729, in the British colonies in North America. While previous scholars have emphasised the 'civilising' aspirations of the SSPCK, Loughlin highlights the fundamental importance of the Christianizing mission in the Society's work. For the SSPCK, she maintains, the expanding British Empire had a providential purpose, which was to facilitate the spread of Christianity to all peoples. By sharing in this divine design for empire, Presbyterian Scotland would fulfil its own providential purpose as an elect nation, a nation chosen by God at the Reformation and brought into union with England by divine plan.

In ‘Christianity and Empire: the Christian Mission in Late Imperial China’ – which is based on his plenary lecture at the summer conference – Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, a historian of the European Reformations and biographer of the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci, continues the exploration of missions and empire with a wide-ranging discussion of the history of missions in Imperial China. He compares and contrasts two periods in the history of Christian missions in China. The first was the period of the early Catholic, especially Jesuit, missions in China from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries. These early Catholic missionaries, he notes, were not supported by Western military power, their mission was characterised by respect for Chinese civilisation, and they endeavoured to accommodate Christianity to Chinese culture. As a result, they had considerable success – until the Papacy in Rome condemned their policy of accommodation in the early eighteenth century, leading an outraged Chinese emperor to expel the missionaries. Hsia’s second phase of Christian missionary activity began in the early nineteenth century, and was associated with the military aggression of Western imperial powers, especially Britain and France. This connection of Christian missions and Western imperialism, as Hsia shows, was in stark contrast to the early modern Catholic missions, and would have highly damaging effects for Christianity in twentieth-century China.

The Nineteenth Century

The next group of essays explores the relations of Church and empire in its global context during the nineteenth century, considering the complex interactions of missions, mass migrations of people, settlement colonies, and Western imperial dominion over the vast populations in Asia and Africa. ‘Providential Empire? The Established Church of England and the Nineteenth-Century British Empire in India’ is based on my own presidential address as a historian of modern Britain and the British Empire, at the summer conference. This

essay explores the idea, prevalent in Britain, that Britain's imperial control of India, the 'crown jewel' of the nineteenth-century British Empire, was part of the providential plan for the spread of Christianity to Asia, and that India would be Christianised through the alliance of Church and Empire as represented by an established Anglican Church in India. This idea inspired considerable effort and it had some success. But it did not lead even remotely to the Christianisation of India, and the failure raised troubling questions for many Anglicans about the alliance of Church and Empire, and providential purpose of empires. The failure drew some Anglicans to new interpretations of the providential purpose, including the idea that the divine purpose of the British Empire might be to facilitate dialogue and cross-fertilisations between the religions of the West and East.

In 'Special Worship in the British Empire: from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Centuries', Joseph Hardwick and Philip Williamson consider the role of special days of worship, which were proclaimed at times of crisis by the British Crown and later by colonial governments, in promoting a sense of unity across the British Empire. These special days of worship revealed much about British attitudes towards divine providence, collective sin and special repentance. The records of how people responded to these special days over the course of time also reflected the changing attitudes concerning divine providence and the higher purposes of empire. As the authors argue, the continuing practice of proclaiming special days of worship suggests that 'the sense of a unified and righteous empire under God remained strong' well into the twentieth century.

In his essay 'Queen Adelaide and the Extension of Anglicanism in Malta', Nicholas Dixon explores the fascinating early history of the grandiose neo-classical St. Paul's church, known as 'Queen Adelaide's church', in Valletta, Malta. Dixon shows how this Anglican church, consecrated in 1844, was part of the larger movement for the extension of Anglicanism in the Mediterranean world, a movement that also found expression in the

consecration of the first bishop of Gibraltar, in 1842. Malta, many hoped, would become a centre of Anglican missionary activity at a time when imperial Britain had a major presence in the Mediterranean. However, the Catholic Maltese disliked having this large Protestant church, with its spire of over 60 metres, towering over their city, and the church did not fulfil its larger missionary aspirations, but it became mainly a church for Malta's English-speaking Protestant community. Emily Turner's essay, 'Claiming the Land: The Church Missionary Society and Architecture in the Arctic', was awarded the Michael J. Kennedy Prize for the best essay by a postgraduate student. It explores the Anglican missions in the forbidding landscape of the Canadian arctic, and in particular their use of architecture to bring Christianity and civilisation to the limits of the habitable earth. The Canadian arctic, Turner shows, captured the imagination of the mission-supporting public in Britain, and in 1820 the Church Missionary Society (CMS) began establishing mission stations, often adjacent to the trading posts of the Hudson's Bay Company. Turner gives particular attention to the buildings of the CMS mission stations, including the use of the gothic style and the ideal of settled villages, with the church and school at the centre, as means of transforming the arctic land and peoples, and integrating them into the Protestant Empire.

Rowan Strong, historian of global Anglicanism, in his essay on 'Anglican Emigrant Chaplaincy and the British Empire and Beyond, c1840-90', discusses Anglican efforts to provide emigrants with chaplaincy services on the long voyages to their new homes in the settlement colonies and beyond. The aim of this emigrant chaplaincy, he argues, was less about spreading a British Christian culture to the British Empire, and more about promoting the preaching, discipline and pastoral work of the Anglican Church in the new settlements. This commitment to the Church was the primary concern in emigrant chaplaincy in its beginnings in the 1840s, and it remained the primary concern in the 1880s and 1890s, despite the rising popularity of imperialism. Pro-imperial sentiments, he concludes, were relatively

scarce in the Anglican emigrant chaplaincy networks. In his 'Sisters and Brothers Abroad: Gender, Race, Empire and Anglican Missionary Reformist in Hawai'i and the Pacific, 1858-1875', Steven Maughan considers the work of the English Anglo-Catholics, especially the Anglican Sisters of the Society of the Most Holy Trinity, in the Hawaiian archipelago during the period when both Britain and the United States were demonstrating imperialist ambitions for the islands. While they disliked the austerities of American evangelicalism and the ambitions of American imperialists, the Anglo-Catholic missionaries in Hawaii were not much interested in supporting British imperial designs; far more important for them were the enculturation of Christianity and the spiritual mission of the Anglican Church in the islands.

In her essay, 'Ultramontane Efforts in the Ottoman Empire in the 1860s and 1870s', Mariam Kartashyan directs attention to a complex episode that involved the Armenian Catholic Patriarchy, the Papacy, the Ottoman Empire, and the Western imperial powers. It began in the later 1860s, when the more assertive Papacy of Pius IX, with its Ultramontane commitments, moved to increase its authority over the Armenian Catholic Church in matters of doctrine, ritual and ecclesiastical appointments. Although in union with Rome since 1742, the Armenian Catholics had long enjoyed considerable autonomy as well as certain protections from the Ottoman government. Now the Papacy acted to enhance its power in the East by restricting the traditional ecclesiastical rights of the Armenian Catholic Church. This resulted in considerable Armenian Catholic discontent and resistance, while the Ottoman regime also opposed the Ultramontane policies of the Papacy. The Western imperial powers, however, agreed to support the Papal actions, and the Armenian Catholic Church and the Ottoman Empire were forced to acquiesce in the enhanced Papal power and authority.

Into the Twentieth Century

The final group of essays consider the connections of Protestantism and the British Empire in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In '"Britishers and Protestants": Protestantism and Imperial British Identities in Britain, Canada and Australia from the 1880s to the 1920s', Geraldine Vaughan notes how Protestant associations, including the Imperial Protestant Federation (1898) and the Orange Lodges, sought to preserve what they defined as the Protestant identity of the British Empire. For them, this Protestant imperial identity represented progress and freedom. However, it was now under threat as a result of large-scale Catholic migration from Ireland and Europe into the British settlement colonies, with the Catholic migrants characterised by disloyalty, superstition and papal tyranny. The advocates of imperial Protestantism, Vaughan further observes, were not a small fringe; by 1906, the Imperial Protestant Federation alone claimed some 1.6 million members across the British Empire. The continuing twentieth-century beliefs in a Protestant, providential British Empire receive further attention in 'Englishness, Empire and Nostalgia: A Heterodox Religious Community's Appeal in the Interwar Years'. Here Jane Shaw explores the Panacea Society, a Protestant millenarian group based in England, which established networks of believers throughout the British Empire. Shaw considers the Panacea Society's beliefs and activities between 1919 and 1939, including their links with the early nineteenth-century prophetic movement of Joanna Southcott, their sense of Britain being at the centre of the world, and their distinctive healing ministry. However, by the end of the 1930s, both imperial Protestantism and the Panacea Society were waning, reflecting the declining notions of a providential British Empire.

The final two essays in this volume focus on twentieth-century Christian missionary critics of empire. In '"A triangular conflict": The Nyasaland Protectorate and Two Missions, 1915-33', David Thompson directs his essay to the complex relations of missions, empire and liberation movements in early twentieth-century central Africa. Thompson explores the

problems that arose from Britain's expulsion of all missionaries from its Nyasaland protectorate in the aftermath of the rising for independence led by John Chilembwe in 1915. While the colonial administrators suspected most missionaries of being overly sympathetic to African aspirations, they viewed the missionaries of the Churches of Christ, with their ideas of racial equality through education, as especially dangerous. The main Presbyterian missions encouraged government distrust of the Churches of Christ, whose missionaries were not readmitted to Nyasaland until 1928. By then, Africans were increasingly taking over the leadership of the Churches of Christ and embracing these Churches, accelerating the process of African empowerment which the colonial administrators had sought to curtail. In the final essay of this volume, Philip Lockley considers an Anglican missionary whose Christian social values led him to identify with the subject peoples of empire and become an uncompromising critic of imperialism. In 'Social Anglicanism and Empire: C. F. Andrews's Christian Socialism', Lockley discusses the early career of Andrews, who first came to India in 1904, aged 33, as a Church of England missionary, and soon became the friend of Mahatma Gandhi and supporter of Indian independence. For Lockley, the vital defining influence in Andrews's life was the Christian socialism he had embraced in England during the 1890s, including an emphasis on Christ's incarnation as representing the unity of humankind and the Church's special mission to the poor. Andrews's Christian socialist commitments, as Lockley shows, were developed through settlement work in deprived areas of London, and then taken with him to India, where he embraced a global perspective on social justice, a critique of empire and a lifelong effort to disentangle the historic links between Church and empire.

***

As the wide-ranging essays in this volume indicate, the relations of the Church and imperial power have had a vital role in shaping the global history of Christianity. The Church

emerged within the Roman empire, and as it developed its larger mission to the world the Church often mirrored the forms of imperial rule. Both Church and empire claimed to embody universal truths and values, both claimed to unite peoples of different racial, ethnic and national identities into a larger whole, and both claimed to represent 'civilisation'. The Church could view empires as forming part of the providential plan for humankind, facilitating the spread of the gospel through networks of communication, the maintenance of internal peace and order, the promotion of common languages, and legal protections for churches and missionaries. Empires could view churches as valuable allies in imperial rule, teaching their adherents the virtues of passive obedience and non-resistance, and uniting populations around a common faith.

But empires were also based on power, conquest and the subjugation of other peoples; they could turn regions into deserts and call it peace, and they could derive wealth from tribute, exploitation and slavery. What they called civilisation often meant oppression to subject peoples. An underlying question that informs many of the essays collected here is the extent to which the Church could preserve its independent spiritual witness while in alliance with imperial power. The Church should recognise only the headship of Christ and it was called by its founder to special concern for the poor and oppressed of the world. And yet the temptation to compromise some of its fundamental principles in order to secure the benefits of alliance with imperial power, including state support for its pastoral work and missionary outreach, could be very great indeed. It is apparent from our essays that many Christians, in their commitment to Church principles, were prepared to distance themselves from, or even challenge imperial power structures. Other Christians, however, viewed imperial power as divinely ordained. Moreover, even when Churches believed that they preserved their independent Christian witness while in alliance with empire, for subject peoples the Churches

could appear as supporters of imperial dominance. How the church can and should relate to secular power remains an enduring question even in our arguably post-imperial age.